



STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KEVIN W. CONCANNON, DIRECTOR

INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 680

TO: Iowa Medicaid Home Health Agency Providers

ISSUED BY: Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise

DATE: February 11, 2008

RE: Iowa Medicaid Electronic Record System (I-MERS)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

The Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME) is pleased to announce the release of an exciting new patient management tool that we believe will be able to provide enormous assistance to Home Health providers as they strive to coordinate care given to their patients.

The Iowa Medicaid Electronic Record System (I-MERS) is a web-based tool that will give providers up-to-date information about what services have been paid for by Iowa Medicaid. I-MERS will allow treating providers to view Medicaid members' medical procedures, prescriptions, and other services that are currently in the Medicaid computer system.

The system will be available immediately to the above noted Medicaid providers. Registration is required. (see next page).

Iowa Medicaid is providing this service at no charge in hopes that the service will decrease duplication of effort and greatly benefit Iowa Medicaid practitioners by providing critical information that was not available to providers previously.

This new system is not a complete electronic medical record system. It provides a listing of each individual service paid for by the Medicaid program. While I-MERS will not provide clinical notes or lab test results, it will provide a wealth of information, such as the procedures and prescriptions previously provided the member, as well as the prior providers' names and contact information. At a glance, you will know if the patient has had radiographic examinations, dental services, medical supplies, prescription drugs (including dosage), or most other covered services that have resulted in submission of a claim to Iowa Medicaid.

- *As just one example of how the system can be used -- How many times do you ask a patient what medications they are taking and they can't remember? I-MERS will be able to tell you what prescriptions Iowa Medicaid paid for, the dosage and quantity, and when they were received.*

Access to this information is secure and provided through a web portal. The system provides access to Protected Health Information as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). **Providers will be responsible for ensuring appropriate usage by their staff and be in full compliance with HIPAA and the Department's statutory confidentiality obligations found at section 217.30 of the Iowa Code.**

This is just a starting point, and we look forward to continued feedback from our provider community regarding how we can improve the system.

How to Register for Access

Registration is accomplished on an organizational basis (e.g. Clinic, Group Practice, Hospital, etc). To register your organization and users:

1. **Send a letter.** The Iowa Medicaid provider requesting access to the I-MERS system must send a letter on the organization's letterhead. The provider sending the letter requesting access to I-MERS will be responsible for assuring appropriate staff usage under HIPAA. Indicate "I-MERS Registration" in the subject line of the letter and send the letter to:

**IME Provider Services
IMERS Access
100 Army Post Rd
Des Moines, Iowa 50315**

2. **Include in the letter:**

- a. Your Provider Number (7 digit Medicaid provider number or NPI)
- b. Your Provider – Home Health Agency
- c. Tax ID Number
- d. The name and address of the

- e. The primary point of contact for the organization, a telephone number, an e-mail address, and your role within the organization (e.g. Director of Medical Services, Managing Partner, etc)
 - f. Signature
3. IME personnel will then contact you to discuss user names, passwords and provide you with additional instructions.

Important Notes and Limitations of the I-MERS System

There are some design aspects of I-MERS that you must be aware of when using the system:

- I-MERS only provides information on currently eligible Medicaid Members. However, this is not a substitute for eligibility verification through IME's eligibility verification systems (e.g. phone or website);
- Sensitive information, such as AIDS/HIV, substance abuse, and mental health-related is not currently available through this system because of legal impediments. As we work through the business, privacy, and security issues surrounding the handling and care of this information, we will implement this functionality within I-MERS;

You must be an active Iowa Medicaid provider, be a registered user to access this system, and **be responsible for ensuring appropriate usage by your staff and be in full compliance with HIPAA and the Department's statutory confidentiality obligations found at section 217.30 of the Iowa Code.**

- To access information on a Medicaid Member, a Provider must enter the Member's ID, confirm their identity, and identify the Licensed Medical Health Provider who will be using this information.
- To take advantage of this system, each user must acknowledge the terms and conditions of use. Terms and conditions are presented to the user on their first use and can be accessed within the system from any of the web screens. In particular, it is important to remember that HIPAA privacy and security rules and regulations must be adhered to. As with any electronic system, appropriate access procedures and protocols by users will help prevent unintended disclosures.
- This information is being made available for the sole purpose of enhancing the quality of care our provider community provides to Medicaid Members, any other use of the information or the system is strictly prohibited.

Additional information on I-MERS can be found at the Iowa Medicaid Enterprise website; <http://www.ime.state.ia.us>. Please click on providers, quick links on the right side of the page, and then I-MERS to access this additional information.